

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 12283 230939Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----050317 230945Z /15
R 230908Z JUL 77 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7602

S E C R E T CAIRO 12283

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINR, EG
SUBJECT: SPECULATION ON FAHMY'S POSITION

1. EVER SINCE FAHMY'S ABORTIVE MISSION TO MOSCOW, THERE HAS BEEN TALK THAT SADAT IS DISSATISFIED WITH HIM AND MAY DROP HIM. SADAT NEVER EXPECTED MISSION TO SUCCEED, BUT ACCEPTED FAHMY'S URGINGS AND ALLOWED HIM TO GO. THE PRESIDENT'S ATTITUDE SINCE FAHMY'S RETURN HAS BEEN "I TOLD YOU SO" AND HE HAS CONTINUED HIS PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE SOVIETS. FAHMY IS CLEARLY SMARTING A BIT UNDER THIS IMPLIED REBUKE AND CLAIMS SADAT IS EXAGGERATING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SO-CALLED BREZHNEV "THREATS," EXCEPT IN RESPECT TO ETHIOPIA. FAHMY'S CRITICS, WHO ARE LEGION, HAVE SEIZED UPON SITUATION AND ARE PREDICTING HIS EARLY DEMISE.

2. ONE VERSION WAS GIVEN TO ME LAST EVENING BY IRANIAN AMBASSADOR BAHRAMY, WHO TENDS TO POUNCE ON RUMORS AND PEDDLE THEM. ACCORDING TO HIS VERSION, SADAT WANTS TO GET RID OF FAHMY AND REPLACE HIM WITH MINSTATE MOHAMED RIAD. HOWEVER, MOHAMED RIAD DOES NOT HAVE THE FORCEFUL PERSONALITY FOR THE JOB. HENCE,

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 12283 230939Z

BAHRAMY'S VERSION HAS IT, SADAT INTENDS TO APPOINT ASHRAF GHORBAL AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRESENT MFA UNDERSEC SALAH AL-HASSAN (A SENIOR EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR) AS NO. 2 IN MFA. STORY GOES ON TO SUGGEST THAT SAYED MAREI, PRESENT SPEAKER OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, WOULD THEN BE APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON. IRANIAN AMBASSADOR IS PERSUADED STORY IS TRUE AND

ASSERTS GHORBAL, IF NAMED, WOULD PURSUE A STRONGER PRO-AMERICAN POLICY THAN FAHMY HAS. FRENCH EMBASSY IS PEDDLING SIMILAR VERSION (WHICH MAY BE WHERE BAHRAMY GOT HIS STORY) ADDING REASON FAHMY DID NOT GO TO OAU FONMIN MEETING WAS TO REMAIN CLOSE TO SADAT IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIS OWN POSITION.

3. I REPORT THE ABOVE BECAUSE THE STORY IS CIRCULATING AND MAY COME TO YOUR ATTENTION. I HAVE SENSED NOTHING THAT WOULD SUPPORT IT. WHILE SADAT AND FAHMY ARE INDEED IN SOME DISAGREEMENT ON THE SOVIETS, AND FAHMY IS NOT LOATHE TO CRITICIZE SADAT'S VIEWS, EVERYTHING I SEE INDICATES THEY ARE STILL WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER. FAHMY, OF COURSE, KNOWS DESIRABILITY STAYING CLOSE TO SADAT IN ORDER TO BE ABLE INFLUENCE THE PRESIDENT ON ISSUES. HOWEVER, REASON HE DID NOT GO TO OAU FONMIN MEETING IS MUCH MORE SIMPLE--HE THINKS THEY ARE USELESS AND ALWAYS TRIES TO AVOID ATTENDING. MY GUESS IS THAT FOR MANY OF FAHMY'S CRITICS, THE WISH IS FATHER TO THE THOUGHT.

4. HOWEVER, FAHMY, WHOSE ANTENNAE ARE OUT, HAS DOUBTLESS HEARD THE STORY AND HIS EFFORTS EXCLUDE GHORBAL FROM ANY POLICY COUNCILS OR INFO MAY BE EXPECTED INTENSIFY.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, PERSONNEL SECURITY, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAIRO12283
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850052-2060
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770726/aaaaawji.tel
Line Count: 86
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 78d3f264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1769013
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPECULATION ON FAHMY'S POSITION
TAGS: PINT, PINR, EG, (FAHMY, ISMAIL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/78d3f264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009